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SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, EEB/ESC, OES/EGC, IO/EDA

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SUBJECT: KUWAIT WELCOMES US POSITION ON THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY

REF: SECSTATE 61286

¶1. (SBU) EconCouns discussed U.S. views on the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) separately with Kuwait Institute Deputy Director General Dr. Mohammed Salman and with Rashid Al-Saleh of the MFA's International Organizations Department. Both welcomed the news that the USG was seriously considering signing the IRENA statute and supported the UAE as the IRENA headquarters. Al-Saleh enthused that this was "good for the UAE and developing countries." Dr. Salman's response was an equally enthusiastic "fantastic." Both supported the idea that IRENA fill existing gaps rather than duplicate efforts and that its primary mission should be capacity building and technical assistance work with developing countries. Dr. Salman, who had a better technical understanding of the subject replied "capacity building, exactly."

¶2. (SBU) Both confirmed the GoK's interest in joining IRENA and expressed their hope that it would be able to do so in time for the June 28-30 meeting in Egypt. They cautioned, however, that Kuwait still needed to complete its internal procedures to be able to join. Al-Saleh noted that Kuwait wanted its position to be in line with a unified GCC position. He told EconCouns that he believed that there would be no problem in that regard from other GCC members.

¶3. (SBU) For his part, Dr. Salman stressed KISR's strong interest in joining IRENA and its interest in becoming Kuwait' National Focal Point for IRENA, the way it was for the IAEA. He added that KISR wanted to build a regional center of excellence for renewable energy. He explained that Kuwait's Ministries of Oil and Electricity and Water and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation were waiting on the MFA to authorize who would lead Kuwait's delegation and have signature authority for IRENA. He also noted that both Ministries wanted to be Kuwait's National Focal Point. Due to the continuing bureaucratic infighting, he was somewhat pessimistic about the GoK's ability to come to a speedy decision.

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